



U.S. Department of Justice

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ROCKFORD MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ROBBERY OF STATE BANK OF PAW PAW

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ROBERT D. GRANT, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; TIM BIVINS, Lee County Sheriff; and ROGER A. SCOTT, DeKalb County Sheriff, today made the following announcement:

JACOB A. FRUIT, 25, of Rockford, Illinois, pleaded guilty in federal court today to robbing the State Bank of Paw Paw, 235 Chicago Road, Paw Paw, Illinois, on January 5, 2007. Also charged in the bank robbery was **PHILLIP G. WRIGHT**, 21, of Winnebago, Illinois, who pled guilty on March 19, 2007.

In pleading guilty, Fruit admitted that on the morning of January 5, 2007, he and Wright agreed to rob the State Bank of Paw Paw. According to the plea agreement, Wright entered the bank, while Fruit remained outside the front door as a “look out.” Fruit further admitted that, after the robbery was completed, he and Wright drove away in Wright’s Jeep Cherokee, with Wright driving. Fruit also acknowledged in his plea agreement that a short distance from the bank, a Lee County Sheriff’s deputy signaled for Wright to stop. After initially stopping the jeep, Wright and Fruit sped off and led Lee County and DeKalb County Sheriff’s deputies on a high speed chase, during which Fruit threw several items out of the window of the jeep. Fruit further admitted that Wright eventually pulled into a farm on the outskirts of Sycamore, Illinois, and both he and Wright jumped out of the jeep and began to run towards the woods. According to the plea agreement, after a short foot-chase, both men were taken into custody by DeKalb and Lee County deputies. Both men have been held in federal custody since that date.

Sentencing for Fruit will be conducted on December 5, 2007, at 2:00 p.m. Fruit faces a possible maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, up to 3 years of supervised release following imprisonment, and full restitution. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by the Rockford office of the FBI. The Lee County Sheriff’s Department and the DeKalb County Sheriff’s Department assisted with the investigation. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney SCOTT A. VERSEMAN.

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